

**Virginia Advisory Committee
For the Education of the Gifted
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Richmond, Virginia
December 7, 2001**

Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted Chair, G. Hubbard, called the meeting to order at 9:55am. Chair Hubbard asked for a volunteer to serve as timekeeper for the meeting. P. Cox volunteered to serve. Chair Hubbard asked for a volunteer to serve as process observer for the meeting. H. Dawson volunteered to serve.

VACEG members, including new members, introduced themselves. VACEG members present included:

Chair G. Hubbard, T. Douglas, E. Daniels, J. Towslee, A. Bowman, D. McKinney, S. Smith, J. Green, H. Dawson, N. Ballinger, V. Perz, L. F. Brown, R. T. Turner, E. Snyder, S. Winett, J. Leslie, P. Cox, N. Walsh, R. V. Turner, B. McGonagill and J. Marler.

P. Tiscornia, director of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, welcomed and shared information about the school.

- The school has been a Governor's School for ten years, located at Thomas Jefferson High School.
- The school moved to Maggie L. Walker High School in September 2001.
- The school is involved in community service for the surrounding community.
- The school is the Virginia center for the nationally recognized We The People program.
- The school has developed partnerships to support social services in the area.
- The school is the seat for government studies (state, national, and international) in the Richmond area.
- Students attend the school from thirteen surrounding school systems.
- Students are required to study six years of language.
- Students are involved in many government and international studies electives.
- Students need twenty-nine completed credits to graduate.
- Former students, parents, and community members helped with the school's restoration efforts.

C. Hall and G. Harris led VACEG members on a thorough tour of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, noting present and past historic elements of the school's architecture, organization, and operation.

Following the tour, Chair Hubbard asked VACEG members to review the minutes from the September 21st meeting. Corrections were noted. N. Walsh moved the approval of the minutes as amended. J. Leslie seconded. The minutes were approved.

Chair Hubbard asked B. McGonagill to provide new members with a detailed picture of the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* (VR 270-01-0002). B. McGonagill shared information and printed copies of the regulations. Important parts of the presentation included:

The Virginia Plan for the Gifted contains both regulations and technical assistance.

- The last revisions to the guide were made in 1993.
- The *Virginia Plan* requires local school divisions to develop a plan for gifted education.
- The *Code of Virginia* requires local school divisions to submit an annual report.
- The local plan shows how the division may accomplish the expectations of the state regulations.
- The local gifted advisory committee is an important part of the gifted plan for the locality and has been established by the *Code of Virginia*.

The state regulations are Virginia's requirements.

- The Virginia Department of Education requires all public schools to comply with the regulations.
- The state regulations apply to every local school division in Virginia, K-12.
- Multiple criteria are required for identification and placement of gifted students.
- Local school divisions may go beyond the requirements of the regulations in serving gifted students.
- Gifted students may be served through either general intellectual ability or specific academic aptitude programs.
- Local school divisions may offer these programs as well:
 - a) technical and practical arts
 - b) visual and performing arts

Much time and effort are spent on identification procedures for gifted students.

- Each local school division establishes a pool of candidates to be considered for gifted services.
- All referral information is important for student placement.
- Local school divisions decide the specific parameters for placement of students.
- The Virginia Department of Education does not set cut scores for placement in local school divisions.
- Student candidates will be screened and identification will be made on the basis of multiple criteria.
- Referral is a direct path into the pool of candidates to be considered for gifted services.
- Referrals must be in writing and must be signed by those persons recommending referral.
- Referred students will move on to the actual identification process.
- Screening is an indirect path; educators may collect and evaluate information about the student candidate in each criterion area established by the local school division.
- Local school divisions are required to have at least four identification measures (but they may have more).

Each school division must have a statement that no single test score will not determine a student's eligibility for gifted programs.

- Matrices may be used to compile scores on the criteria measures and show points scored for placement.
- Student profiles may be used to present information on student strengths through a continuum of scores.
- Parents should be informed of their right to appeal the decision about placement of their child.

Notification of parents is expected.

- The local school division must notify parents of the testing and get permission from the parents to test, in writing.
- The local school division must ask for permission to serve the student and get written permission.
- The local school division must notify parents of changes in services for students.
- The local school division must have appeals and exit procedures in place.

Plans must indicate who the teachers of gifted in local school divisions are and what training have they received.

- Virginia colleges/universities offer an endorsement in gifted education.
- The Virginia Department of Education does not require teachers of the gifted to hold an endorsement for gifted in order to teach identified students.
- Local training is acceptable for teachers.

The Virginia Plan explains some of the kinds of services for the gifted.

- For educators, the regulations in the Virginia Plan are the important part.
- The Department of Education's website provides current information regarding the regulations and supporting materials.

The Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted is a public group that must accept public comment.

- Recommendations about gifted services may be made public through the annual report the VACEG provides the Virginia Board of Education.

Chair Hubbard thanked B. McGonagill for reporting. VACEG members were asked to review VACEG bylaws information and conduct related discussions during lunch.

Chair Hubbard called VACEG members to order after a working lunch. Chair Hubbard asked T. Douglas and B. McGonagill, in the absence of K. Eicher, to share information about the revisions in the nomination process for service on the VACEG Board.

Chair Hubbard asked B. McGonagill to review the standards and other documents regarding programs for the gifted that had been obtained from other states. An overview of the materials from Arizona, Montana, and Texas was provided. VACEG Board members were asked to review the information in more depth before the next meeting. More information and samples will be available before the next meeting.

Chair Hubbard concluded with these observations:

- Information from other states may help contrast Virginia's plan for gifted education.
- Information from other states may clarify ideas about state identification procedures and regulations.
- Information from other states may clarify ideas about local identification procedures and regulations.

Chair Hubbard reminded the membership that one of the recommendations from the Department of Education was that the VACEG develop a self-assessment document for school divisions to use prior to the development of their local plans. Chair Hubbard commented that, although the regulations are for compliance, if VACEG could share information about exemplary gifted programs, without being prescriptive, coordinators, practitioners, and programs could benefit.

Discussions were held to consolidate the issues/concerns on staff development and program standards to be studied through subcommittees for the next two years. In addition to the two previous subcommittees, a third will be established. VACEG members who wish to serve on an identification subcommittee include:

A. Bowman, A. Smith, L.F. Brown, P. Cox.

Subcommittee meetings will be conducted during the two remaining VACEG meetings for the 2001-2002 school year and throughout the 2002-2003 term.

Questions relating to the day's discussions included:

- What might a coherent gifted program look like?
- What are local school divisions in Virginia actually doing in their gifted programs?
- Is Virginia doing what it should be doing for gifted education?
- What data on plans and systems are available?
- Could VACEG sponsor panel discussions with local superintendents and division representatives to discover what their perceived needs for gifted education and training are?
- Can VACEG receive real, unfiltered information about real needs of gifted educators and students?
- Could VACEG have representatives from college boards relate how Advance Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs fit into the placement of gifted students?
- Can VACEG discover more workable exit procedures for gifted programs?

Chair Hubbard expressed gratitude to VACEG members for their contributions and discussions during the meeting. The next VACEG meeting will be scheduled at the University of Richmond on February 15, 2002. If weather causes a need for an alternate meeting, the meeting will be held at the University of Richmond on February 22, 2002.

Chair Hubbard asked each VACEG member to speak about the constituent organization he/she represents. E. Snyder advised VACEG that the Mary Passage Middle School opened in Newport News in the fall 2001.

Chair Hubbard reminded each VACEG member to review the proposed changes to the bylaws to be prepared to join in discussion prior to the vote at the next meeting and to be prepared to participate in subcommittee work in February. Chair Hubbard thanked the members of VACEG and adjourned the meeting at 2:35pm.